

**Northeastern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes
January 18, 2007
BLM Battle Mountain Field Office
Battle Mountain, Nevada**

Resource Advisory Council (RAC) Members Present and Category Represented:

Larry Barngrover	(2) Wildlife
Sheri Eklund-Brown	(3) Elected Official
Vince Garcia	(3) Native American
Dave Gaskin	(3) State Employee
Jon Hutchings	(3) Public At Large
Cyd McMullen	(2) Cultural Resources
Kirk Nicholes	(1) Energy/Minerals
Barry Perryman	(3) Academia
Hank Vogler	(1) Federal Grazing Permittee
Jeff White	(1) Energy/Minerals

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Representatives Present:

Mike Brown	Public Affairs Officer, Elko Field Office
Stephanie Connolly	Associate Field Manager, Ely Field Office
Helen Hankins	Field Office Manager, Elko Field Office
Doran Sanchez	Chief Communications, Nevada State Office
Gene Seidlitz	Associate Field Manager, Battle Mountain FO
Stephanie Trujillo	Administrative Assistant, Ely Field Office

Other Attendees

Terry Chute	District Ranger, Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest
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8:15 a.m. Chairman Vince Garcia welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order. Everyone introduced themselves. A get well card for Les Hansen (who is having surgery) was passed around for attendees to sign.

I. REVIEW & APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

- Sheri Eklund-Brown sent corrections to Mike Brown of the November 3, 2006 meeting in Reno, Nev., and those corrected minutes are in the members' handouts.

- Larry Barngrover noted on Page 2 of the minutes a question about BLM's intent with managing firearms. After discussion, it was recommended to delete two sentences.

- Jon Hutchings noted in the discussion of Fire Closures in the Field Managers' Reports, that he recommended going out next spring to look at vegetation response, not vegetation criteria.

Jon Hutchings made a motion to approve the minutes with those corrections. Dave Gaskin seconded the motion. All in favor.

II. SOUTHERN NEVADA PUBLIC LANDS MANAGEMENT ACT ROUND 7 ACQUISITIONS

- Helen Hankins discussed the background of SNPLMA whereby the law provides that certain identified public lands in southern Nevada can be sold and funds can be used to acquire environmentally sensitive or special lands elsewhere in Nevada. Agencies or individuals can nominate a parcel for acquisition. A packet must be submitted with pre-determined criteria. The nominations are reviewed by a panel of technical staff as a working group (Federal agencies, state agencies, NAACO) and they rank the proposals

For Round 7 there were 15 proposals and the Maggie Creek Conservation Easement ranked 10th. There is only enough funding in this round for six or seven acquisitions. The reasons why Maggie Creek did not rate higher are criteria related – the easement does not provide public access and the values protected are not traditional values such as riparian or Threatened and Endangered Species. The purpose of the Conservation Easement is for the government to acquire the development rights on 3,200 acres around the Maggie Creek Ranch to protect the Trail Center view shed to the mouth of the South Fork of the Humboldt Canyon. The South Fork of the Humboldt is historically important as part of the Hastings Cutoff and the Donner-Reed Party route. It was a camp site along the California Trail. \$12 million has been spent on the Trail Center and another \$2 to 4 million is expected in the next couple years.

Letters of support were sent with the package. The next step will be the working group submitting the projects to Secretary of Interior Kempthorne for approval of funding. Part of the new process is to ask the RACs for their input on projects in their respective areas.

- Stephanie Connolly distributed a handout and discussed Indian Creek Ranch proposal. The Indian Creek Ranch was not forwarded by the subgroup to the working group. There is Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation interest. Possibly there will be a resubmission for Round VIII. The White Pine County Commission supports the proposal with the passage of the White Pine County Land Bill. The BLM was approached for sale of the parcels. The White Pine County Land Bill changed it to designated wilderness. Access is very difficult to complete.

- Sheri Eklund-Brown asked about the location of the proposed acquisition and if it is in Elko county, it is appropriate for designation, and how much money is involved.

- Stephanie Connolly said it is in White Pine County, the land is undeveloped with riparian in the upper areas and aspen. Fair market value was appraised at \$700,000.

- Hank Vogler noted that with the continued expansion in Clark County, the other sixteen counties will dissolve. Mike Hasting owns the parcel.

- Stephanie Connolly noted that BLM is not in acquisition mode, but in this case 200 acres would be acquired and 40,000 to 45,000 acres of public lands would be sold.

- Jon Hutchings commented that he agrees with Hank Vogler and there is a balance needed to sort out cost/benefits - environmentally sensitive versus economics.

- Hank Vogler noted that this ties to the Southern Nevada Water Authority development and riparian acres are very important in the big picture.
- Helen Hankins discussed the example in Elko County in an earlier round when a rancher wanted \$100 million for a property and appraisal was less than 30% of the asking price. The offer was withdrawn.
- Hank Vogler expressed his concern that Clark County will eventually become private land and 621 permittees' in Nevada will lose their livestock grazing.
- Sheri Eklund-Brown noted that the high estimates tie funds up for the top ones and slows the process.
- Stephanie Connolly noted that the person owns the property would like to sell it to the government and not any other entity. BLM is interested in due to the designated wilderness.
- Larry Barngrover said that the parcel is an in-holding.
- Hank Vogler pointed out that all private land in White Pine County is an in-holding. The lands were homesteaded for a reason – for agriculture.
- General discussion about acquiring lands, disposing lands, and exchanges.
- Helen Hankins discussed recent Elko exchanges with the City of Elko and an 120-acre transfer to. Elko City sold the land for residential development and Jackpot did the same. Quality of visitor experience at the Trail Center is tied to the economy of Elko. Elko City put in \$2 million into the project and 70,000 visitors are expected annually. This will be an economic benefit for Elko
- Jon Hutchings asked which project would be a higher priority.
- Helen said that the RAC can recommend both.
- Cyd McMullen had question on page 6 of the document regarding an agreement with Great Basin College.
- Helen Hankins stated that there were vague discussions with Bill Searle and Great Basin College and BLM was not involved.
- Cyd McMullen asked if there is a SHPO letter.
- Helen said yes, but is not in the handout. Hankins can provide a copy of the letter.
- Cyd McMullen said she believes that project is an important connection to California Trail Center - it is one of the crossroads. The area also has potential for historical archaeology of the Trail. The potential could be lost if developed. There is also prehistoric potential - it is part of the Humboldt corridor.

- Sheri Eklund-Brown noted that the project has been ongoing for many years, it is a huge partnership. There are growth investors contacting Elko County to develop huge projects. The potential for this area to become commercial is high. This could be a phenomenal opportunity.

- Hank Vogler said he is not against the Trail Center, just against the concept of the SNPLMA money being used for the easement.

- Sheri Eklund-Brown said she is advocating for Elko county and the state. The city will profit and all of northeastern Nevada will benefit. She ranks the project higher than the White Pine County project. This will not affect private land property values. Elko County wants no net loss of private versus public land.

1000 Chairman Garcia opened the Public Comment period

- Vince Garcia said he would never see the day when you have to buy property to keep it from being developed. Las Vegas growth and water is affecting our lives. Thankfully there are public lands in Nevada. Garcia agrees with Hank Vogler about land.

- Stephanie Connolly said both of these projects are open for public comment. Neither of these two was recommended for further consideration.

- Barry Perryman said he recommends these projects rather than the Tahoe Basin projects. These two are better for the public good. The RAC should recommend these for the greater good.

- Stephanie Connolly stated that the RAC can recommend reconsideration to the Executive Committee.

- Sheri Eklund-Brown noted that very little SNPLMA money is going to rural Nevada. They have it in Tahoe, Clark County, and Washoe County. The money needs to be distributed more fairly.

- Helen Hankins commented that one project was funded in northeastern Nevada three years ago. In the last seven or eight years – only two projects funded and for very low dollars.

- Sheri Eklund-Brown said an issue is who will enforce the easements. They are recorded with the recorders office.

- Jon Hutchings asked what is BLM's role on conservation easements - who administers? BLM has to manage legalities associated with them which are unusual.

- Helen Hankins said that is a good question - how many conservation easements can BLM hold and manage. There needs to be more discussion.

- Sheri Eklund-Brown asked Doran Sanchez about similar projects done in southern California.

- Doran Sanchez replied that California is different. There are a lot of special management areas and they fall under the jurisdiction of each agency.

-Stephanie Connolly suggested that an agenda item be added to the next meeting for Jim Stobaugh to give a presentation.

- Vince Garcia opened the voting of RAC members for the support of the projects.

- Larry Barngrover said both projects have merit and asks that they be reconsidered and funded. He also asked that BLM discuss access with the landowner and riparian issues.

- Cyd McMullen made a motion to support both projects for Round 7 to both the Executive Committee and Secretary of Interior.

- Helen Hankins said she will draft a letter giving the pros and cons and RAC concerns. Hankins will capture what was discussed and provide a letter for the RAC members to approve and sign.

- Vince Garcia said he has concerns about Wilderness Areas.

- Sheri Eklund-Brown seconded motion for letter of recommendations to be sent for both projects. All in favor except Jon Hutchings opposed.

- Barry Perryman asked that how the SNPLMA process works be put on the agenda for the next meeting.

- Helen Hankins said she had invited Jim Stobaugh to this meeting, but he was unable to attend. We will try to get him for next meeting.

Stephanie Connolly suggested the SNPLMA lead from Las Vegas be invited to give an update of the projects and the process.

Sheri Eklund-Brown noted that the SNPLMA process is a huge application process.

Hank Vogler said he objects to process of finding more sensitive lands. It drives prices up. Mining buying does the same.

General discussion about how SNPLMA money is used and the law.

Stephanie Connolly discussed the Lincoln county Lands Bill.

Sheri Eklund-Brown noted they gave up 100,000 acres of mineral rights for WSAs.

1037 Break

1050 Resume

III. FIRE GRAZING CLOSURES

Battle Mountain Field Office

- Gene Seidlitz gave presentation for the Battle Mountain District. Last summer and early fall engulfed Battle Mountain but not as much as Elko. Right now, the Renewable Resources staff is scheduling meetings with permittees. They do not know yet if there will be any suspension of AUMs. They will decide on fencing, seeding, and rehabilitation

needed. Letters have gone out to impacted permittees and Battle Mountain staff will meet with the one-on-one. At this point, there are no official closures or decisions.

- Sheri Eklund-Brown asked how many permittees are affected in Battle Mountain.
- Gene Seidlitz said seven allotments were affected and 10 or 12 permittees impacted. They will get the exact amount. Proposed rehabilitation will be discussed.
- Hank Vogler asked if anyone was badly affected.
- Gene Seidlitz replied that no one was completely burned out.
- Sheri Eklund-Brown commented that they are looking at all potential options/actions in Elko and asked if Battle Mountain is doing the same.
- Gene Seidlitz remarked that there are some vacant allotments in the southern part of the district (Tonopah) which could be used.
- Hank Vogler asked that Battle Mountain prioritize the permittees by how much they are affected.

Elko Field Office

- Helen Hankins gave the Elko Field Office presentation. Hankins referred to map of the 2006 fires which showed total acres 250,000 private lands burned and approximately 750,000 acres of public land burned. Seventy-one permittees were affected and a handful lost entire allotment – Mitch Heguy and Bill Hall at the Spanish Ranch. Some of the permittees were affected in prior years.
- BLM Elko has had two meetings with permittees in the past six weeks. The purpose of the workshops was to talk about the criteria for reopening allotments. The criteria varies with each allotment. There are some permittees that we still need to have meetings with. Letters will be going out with decisions in the next two weeks. Some permittees have sold or worked out something with their neighbors. BLM sent a letter out last fall to ask permittees to help their neighbors and only had a handful of responses. Most of the allotments' use are running at 60% preference. Not being used means that ranchers are making an economic decision not to graze more cows.
- Effective fuels reduction and fire breaks are key to smaller fires. We need to look at mechanical and chemical treatment means. We have had appeals from Western Watersheds on rehabbing the Winters Fire and IBLA turned it down. We also have an appeal for the Amazon fire rehab.
- Barry Perryman asked how long the appeal slowed BLM down.
- Helen Hankins replied that it did not. The Winters Fire fence contracts have been issued.
- Barry Perryman asked what the basis of the appeal was.
- Helen Hankins replied that BLM furthering the livestock agenda and putting in too many fences.

- General discussion about the appeal and decision.
- Jon Hutchings asked if BLM has data for the amount of permitted use.
- Helen Hankins said we will get it and send to the RAC. Hankins asked why are neighbors unwilling to help, what are the hurdles.
- Hank Vogler said there are less desirable species growing ... we all have paper AUMs.
- Helen Hankins said we need to look at sheep and goat use in the early spring.
- Jon Hutchings remarked that we should look at the hard data – the State Agriculture statistics and RCI statistics and compare them.
- Sheri Eklund-Brown talked about the Western Counties Alliance was in Washington last week promoting the Ranchers Aid Bill. If approved, a waiver of fire insurance would be allowed to be retroactive and provide restoration money. They have the final socio-economic studies on the economic impacts of grazing which will be given to BLM. It can be included in EIS's and NEPA actions.

Ely Field Office

- Stephanie Connolly gave the update for the Ely Field Office. Ely is working the same as the Elko and Battle Mountain Field Offices. They had 100,000 acres burned in Lincoln County with 45 allotments affected. They have agreements with one third of the permittees and are working on the others. There was one fire in White Pine County and it was in a Fire Use Area. Connolly distributed the Emergency Stabilization which follows:

In 2006, Emergency stabilization plans were written for approximately 46 fires and 106,697 acres in the Ely District.

- The 428 acre Adavan Fire was drill seeded in November and December and drill seeding continues on the 2209 acres of the Sherwood Fire.
- Contracting is underway and during February, aerial seeding will occur on 63,068 acres of the burned area.
- Following aerial seeding, ATVs with pipe harrows will be used to cover seed on up to 650 acres on four (4) fire areas (Hambly, Mustang, Range, and Rocky Fires). This will be accomplished using BLM staff.
- Following aerial seeding, up to 80 acres on the Willie Fire in the South Pahroc Range Wilderness, and up to 1200 acres of the Hambly Fire in the Big Rocks Wilderness will be hand raked. Great Basin Institute will assist BLM with this treatment.
- A total of 45 grazing allotments were affected by the fires. Forty-three (43) permittees have grazing permits on the allotments. The range program is working with the grazing permittees to enact grazing closures of the burned areas.
- Because of the fires, horse gathers were scheduled for the Clover Creek, Clover Mt., and Seaman HMAs and the proposed Dry Lake gather was rescheduled from Fall 2007 to winter 2006-2007. Those gathers were interrupted by poor weather in December and gather objectives were not met.
- Fence layout and survey is currently underway to construct approximately 28.5 miles of new temporary protective fence to protect seeding treatments. Fencing will be installed as follows: 4-wheeler (six (6) miles), Mustang (five (5) miles), and Gubler

- (two (2) miles), to protect the seeded areas and to maintain modified livestock grazing. The Sherwood fence (up to 16 miles) is needed to protect the seeded areas from wild horse use.
- During the upcoming growing season, all burned areas will be surveyed for noxious weed infestations. Specialized crews will be sent survey and monitor specific burned areas with known weed infestations (within or nearby the burned area) for newly establishing noxious weed populations (4-wheeler, Clover, Echo, Hambly, Mail Summit 3, Muleshoe, Narrows, Range, Rocky, and Sherwood Fires). On other burned areas, vegetation monitoring crews, wilderness monitoring crews, and other staff would search for weed infestations in conjunction with other duties.
 - Evaluations of slope stability and runoff potential have occurred for the Echo Fire. Appropriate erosion control measures are under evaluation.
- Sheri Eklund Brown asked how difficult it is to do restoration in the desert.
- Stephanie Connolly replied that it is very hard and expensive and there are a lot of variables. There is very little research and Red Brome is taking over. They are using cows to graze down the Red Brome.
- Sheri Eklund-Brown asked what the average duration of closures is.
- Stephanie Connolly replied it depends on the shape of the land when it burned and how the rehab goes.
- Helen Hankins said usually two growing seasons.
- Sheri Eklund-Brown asked if you graze rehabbed lands.
- Stephanie Connolly said no, not if BLM is spending money on seeding. We wait until it comes up and see how it did.
- Hank Vogler talked about goat management and herding. The State Woolgrowers have an agreement with NDOW and Nevada Dept of Agriculture to take domestic sheep found with wild sheep and test them.
- Vince Garcia remarked that grazing begins April 15th and he is concerned about his usage and his neighbors are affected by fires. Is BLM going to look at that (helping neighbors) at renewal time. Garcia does not want to lose his permit and has had pressures on his allotment from others.
- Sheri Eklund-Brown said that Garcia makes a good point. What does BLM do when a permittee doesn't graze all the permitted use?
- Helen Hankins said it's their permit. The only time BLM Elko has done anything was with the Danns and TeMoak Livestock Association. BLM is not being pressured to lease AUMs.
- Stephanie Connolly and Gene Seidlitz discussed how Ely and Battle Mountain view the situation. They (permittees) are the stewards of the land and are managing it ...and BLM does not interfere.

- Helen Hankins said she understands Garcia's concern and BLM won't force him to do something.
- Hank Vogler commented that there are those who are willing to take in over what the land can support with a larger surcharge than the government would assess.
- Jon Hutchings stated that regarding the issue of paper AUMs and the need for AUMs resulting from the fires, that if a permittee allows someone else to graze and there is a problem with the Standards, then at the Allotment Evaluation time, the hammer falls on the permittee. It may not be in their good interest to take on their neighbor.
- Helen Hankins said that is correct.
- Vince Garcia commented many are under stocked because of drought - weather is also a factor.
- Barry Perryman said that you must look at several years' data.
- Hank Vogler talked about the Forest Service requirement of 90% usage every third year. He pays for AUMs but does not graze, it's a game. The numbers may not be true to what the actual AUMs are. Vogler also discussed wild horses eating rehabbed vegetation.
- Gene Seidlitz asked if Vogler's scenario was in a burn area.
- Hank Vogler replied that it was a prescribed burn and mowing. Horses will get there before he does and he wants a thriving and improving environment for the perennials.
- Barry Perryman commented that rehabilitation with grazing is complicated ... but not impossible. He is leaving early and headed to the ranch where he is looking at a pilot of dry cheat grass. They are looking at using dry cheat grass as a supplement ... it is good feed.
- Barry Perryman also commented that the wild horse gather was noted in the managers reports as being cancelled should be postponed. He commended all who are in the process of the gathers. Perryman asked Stephanie Connolly about the percent of allotments impacted by the fire season in the Ely Field Office.
- Stephanie Connolly said about 1 percent was affected.

1200 Lunch

1320 Resume

IV. RANGE UPDATE/PERMIT RENEWALS/VEGETATION MANAGENT

Elko Field Office

- Helen Hankins gave the Elko Field Office presentation. The Elko office is working on rehab and legal issues and this is back to back with permit renewals. We're focusing on the northeastern part of the district for renewals. We're notifying permittees of monitoring trips and interested public are invited to go out, asking for comments. We're developing a series of alternatives which will evolve into the Purpose and Need in the Assessment (if no

progress is made for Rangeland Standards). If progress is made towards Standards, there is no more NEPA (CX). Doing 55 renewals is this year's goal. All need to be completed by 2009, and we expect appeals on decisions. Some are lumped into a single EA - it depends on the situation. There is no mega-EIS planned for multiple permits. We can provide a schedule of this year's renewals that are to be completed.

- Hank Vogler asked about the Wendover Sheep Complex.

- Helen Hankins said Western Watersheds appealed them. The Judge said for BLM to do the Sensitive Species EIS and Western Watersheds appealed the decision. It's been a lot of work for the staff with rehabilitation and litigation.

- Jon Hutchings asked if the approach is similar to Battle Mountain's and talked about doing an overall EA.

- Helen Hankins said the proposal has not changed –to do EAs.

- Jon Hutchings and Hutchings discussed the Standards and Guidelines determinations – and if progress is being made towards Rangeland Health – then BLM can issue the permit renewal under a NEPA CX.

- Hank Vogler asked what if the Standards are not being met.

- Helen Hankins said then BLM needs to look at them. The RACs set these Standards. We need to figure out how to do a formal Standard and Guidelines determination for renewals, changes can be made by agreement.

- Jon Hutchings asked what is the exposure that BLM will have based on less than full analysis in a formal determination if making significant progress.

- Helen Hankins said that in every case we are doing scoping. The 9th Circuit Court is making sure that there is sufficient public involvement. It opens opportunities for comments and we're documenting that these opportunities are given to engage. There are four times for public input. The only period that is appealable is the final.

- Jon Hutchings asked are we talking two appeals, one for the decision and one for the application of the CX.

- Helen Hankins replied that is right but it would probably be one.

Jon Hutchings asked how Battle Mountain does this.

Battle Mountain Field Office

- Gene Seidlitz said that are focusing on monitoring data with permittee and interested public. The likelihood of appeal will be less.

- Helen Hankins commented that Elko used to include a lot of range improvements in the Final Multiple Use Decisions and Battle Mountain does not. There were triggers for appeals. Elko is not putting those in renewals hoping that will reduce amount of litigation.

- Jon Hutchings asked about how BLM can make decision on a permit renewal and meeting Standards and Guidelines and it has only looked at part of the allotment.
- Gene Seidlitz replied that is a good question. We look at existing monitoring data to date. If it is sufficient for a decision we will go forward. If no data, we must collect it.
- Jon Hutchings asked what about last minute monitoring.
- Gene Seidlitz said hopefully that that will not happen as we would have to defend that decision.
- Jon Hutchings added that BLM needs the big picture not just the focused data.

Ely Field Office

- Stephanie Connolly said the Ely Field Office process is not different. Under Bob Abbey and Gene Kolkman, the monitoring was done under watershed analysis. Ely is trying to complete 36 for the year and they will do their best. This is a high priority for the Renewable Resources division.
- Jon Hutchings asked do you know how many will fall under CX and how many under EA.
- Helen Hankins said it is based on the monitoring data. It is based on actual data and staff knowledge.
- Sheri Eklund-Brown asked if ENLC (doing independent studies) is a partner with BLM.
- Stephanie Connolly said yes, when we do watershed assessment it is for all aspects not just for range. Watersheds are prioritized.
- Sheri Eklund-Brown asked if the Northeast Nevada Stewardship Group is gathering data and how will Elko BLM use it.
- Helen Hankins said yes BLM would use the data if quality and standards have been met.
- Sheri Eklund-Brown asked if the renewals in Twin Falls were different.
- Gene Seidlitz replied that they were grouped.
- Jon Hutchings remarked that decisions are getting better.
- Vince Garcia added that this is due to different point of views, we need educate all.
- Helen Hankins said when we lose litigation, we learn hard lessons.
- Sheri Eklund-Brown asked if the other Field Offices are learning these lessons.
- Gene Seidlitz said some in Battle Mountain, but we haven't issued fire decisions yet.
- General discussion about watch-dog groups, FOIAs, appeals, and how BLM deals with them.

- Hank Vogler talked about the Round 7 SNPLMA Ely proposal – Indian Creek – and expressed his displeasure with it.
- Stephanie Connolly said that it will be based on the appraisal. The bottom line is they do not get over fair market value. What they ask is not necessarily what they will get.
- Hank Vogler noted that then they could back out if they do not get the amount they want.

V. FIRE REHABILITATION UPDATE

- Helen Hankins discussed the handout. Hankins discussed what's been completed to date and where we should be at to date. We won't get as much done now with the snow. We'll get to the projects in the spring. Landowners and NDOW are involved. Elko County is trying to get funding for ranchers. So far, litigation has not caused on-the-ground problems.
- Gene Seidlitz discussed his handouts. Battle Mountain is doing ESR treatments now because their fires were late in the season, they did not participate in the September seed buy. They tested seed from the December buy and sent some back. They are doing contracts now for drill and aerial seeding – minimal compared to Elko and Winnemucca.
- Jon Hutchings asked about rehabilitation costs.
- Helen Hankins said Elko has spend \$8 million for seed; Elko has received \$12 million with another \$2-3 million to come. Wildlife organizations and the state have contributed.
- Barry Perryman noted that the percent of ground rehabbed is way down from the 1999 fires due to good management.
- Stephanie Connolly said Ely had 100,000 acres burn mainly in the Mojave Southern RAC's area in Lander County.
- General discussion about spending on fuels reduction versus suppression costs and budgets. Either pay up front or afterwards.
- Barry Perryman noted that ENLC is part of the answer, but you cannot build a program on soft money. The GBRI needs to be funded (WO) needs to step up. Procurement process limits us, no spending before the fact.
- Larry Barngrover added that Washington may be encouraged. It is important to recognize soft money and partners. Progress is being made, but it is slow.
- Gene Seidlitz stated that Congress passed 2823 and 2824 projects after the 1999-2000 fires. We need to act not react. Noxious weeds are another factor - some states have already lost the battle.
- Sheri Eklund-Brown discussed the Nevada Fire Safe Councils.
- Jon Hutchings commented that the Field Managers' reports need to include noxious weed updates.
- Helen Hankins said the vegetation map was introduced at the Tri-RAC. Hankins asked the RAC to send comments to Joe Tague.

- Barry Perryman noted that the Society for Range Management meeting will be in Reno at the Nugget on February 11th -16th and invited the RAC to participate.

VI. OHV UPDATE

- Helen Hankins said since the RAC meeting in Wells, the Draft Spruce Mountain Travel Management Plan has been delayed because of rehab work.

- Sheri Eklund-Brown commented that Gene Kolkman is working on a bill to get OHVs registered. Brown is trying to get Kolkman together with the dealers.

- Gene Seidlitz reported that for the Battle Mountain Shoshone Trail - consultation with Native Americans is scheduled for later this month and will issue an EA. They will meet with the Battle Mountain, Yomba, and Duck Valley Bands. There are permittee concerns and there will be public meetings.

- Stephanie Connolly said that a decision was signed in April for the Lost Ox Trail. There was community concern which is being worked through. Because the public relations was not clear they are looking at it again. The community concerns may be justified. There are sportsmen concerns as well. Ely is looking at dropping higher areas (elk use) waiting on letter from the Coordinated Resource Management Steering Committee before doing anything else. There would be new construction of trails with viable loops and to get out of riparian areas. The White Pine County Land Bill includes the Silver State Trail do a three year study. A technical review team is looking at road closures.

VII. MINING UPDATE

- Dave Gaskin gave the mining update. High metal prices mean more exploration projects. Cortez Hill and others are expanding and working with BLM on projects. NDEP is working with BLM on bonding. Gary Johnson is getting up to speed for BLM.

- Hank Vogler asked if Western Watersheds appeals oil gas leases.

- Helen Hankins said yes.

- Dave Gaskins said the Gold Quarry appeal got a mixed decision. BLM has asked for reconsideration. The emissions standards are going well.

- Jeff White asked about the newly released Cortez Hills EIS; why the delay.

- Gene Seidlitz said the delay due to merger does not see it going six months.

- Larry energy develop info on lease sites that are proposed, wind, geothermal, etc. can protection be built in for leases for energy?

- Helen Hankins discussed the need to talk more about the Emigrant Project with Newmont and Dave Gaskin.

- Larry Barngrover expressed concern about energy development, oil and gas leasing, geothermal, and wind energy. Can we build in protection for resources?

- Helen Hankins talked about Elko's land use plans relative to leasing and stipulations. There is no basis to deny a lease.
- The RAC requested an energy overview presentation at the next meeting.
- Vince discussed developing energy guidelines.
- Jon Hutchings is concerned about energy and rights-of-way in general and would like to see them on a map.
- Jeff White offered to get the sage grouse website address and share it with RAC members.
- Helen Hankins commented that BLM is seeing mineral exploration in places we've never seen before; north of Deeth for example. There is private land development of geothermal resources in Midas now.

VIII. FIELD MANAGER REPORTS

- Stephanie Connolly summarized the White Pine County Lands Bill. Disposing 45,000 acres over the next 10 to 20 years - needs may change. Five percent of the sale revenue goes to the state of Nevada. There are 14 designated Wilderness Areas.
- General discussion about the Wilderness Areas.

Sheri Eklund-Brown moved the meeting adjourned and the motion was seconded by Jeff White. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 3:40 p.m.

Date Approved:

Approved by:

Minutes by Stephanie Trujillo and Mike Brown